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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [GG](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: MFA ON KARASIN VISIT TO TBILISI; DENIES SUPPLYING
NEW ARMS TO ABKHAZIA

REF: MOSCOW 1864

Classified By: Ambassador John R. Beyrle. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary. DFM Karasin's July 4 visit to Tbilisi focused on Russia's response to Georgia's June 23 proposals (reftel), as well as the situation in South Ossetia. MFA officials told us Russia's response was "in line with" the Friends of Georgia proposals, with the GOR emphasizing the need for a non-use of force agreement and settlement of the situation in Kodori. Russia's MOD and MFA avoided denying Georgian press reports July 7 that Russia had supplied 45 vehicles of weapons to Abkhazia. GOR peacekeepers in South Ossetia had told the MFA shelling there July 4 had been deliberately orchestrated to coincide with Karasin's visit. End summary.

2. (C) MFA Deputy Directors for Georgia and Abkhazia Alexey Pavlovskiy and Semyon Grigoriev told us July 7 that the recent spate of bombings in Abkhazia had reinforced the GOR's position that something needed to be done quickly to defuse the tensions in the region. Pavlovskiy said that the response delivered by DFM Karasin to Georgian Deputy FM Vashadze in Tbilisi July 4 was similar to and in line with the Friends of Georgia proposals. The GOR believed the key first steps were the signing of a non-use of force agreement, and settlement of the situation in Kodori. The GOR was also positively inclined toward the idea of creating economic free zones in the Gali and Ochamchire districts and to reaching agreement on the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, but stressed that these and other "political" issues could be addressed after the first two steps were done.

3. (C) Pavlovskiy said that Russia did not see any linkage between the demand for Georgia to withdraw its forces from Kodori and Georgia's insistence that Russia withdraw its additional peacekeeping forces. He concurred with an earlier Ministry of Defense statement July 7 refusing to comment on Georgian press reports July 6 that Russia had moved 45 vehicles containing anti-aircraft systems, armored personnel vehicles, and air-to-air and surface-to-air missiles to Abkhazia. He said that the Ministry's statement that it was "not obliged to comment on all irresponsible and strange" statements from the Georgian side simply demonstrated a weariness with responding to every "unfactual" report, not an attempt to discredit without actually denying the press reports.

4. (C) Pavlovskiy said Karasin and Vashadze had had a "tense discussion" over South Ossetia because the GOR had heard from its peacekeepers that the shelling there appeared to have been a "specially planned operation" timed to coincide with Karasin's visit, and that the Georgian peacekeepers had left

the headquarters 15 minutes before the shelling began.

15. (C) Grigoriev said Medvedev had not had a formal meeting with Saakashvili in Astana, but only a short discussion during the anniversary commemoration. Neither he nor Pavlovskiy had details of the discussion.

BEYRLE